

Remarks/Arguments

Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 14, 25, 33 and 43. Accordingly, claims 1 to 48 are currently pending in this patent application. Applicants now address rejections that were presented in an Office action dated January 2, 2003, as follows:

I. Earlier Rejection of Claims Under Section 103

During earlier prosecution of this application, claims 1 to 48 were finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being allegedly unpatentable over Fang. As an initial matter, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 14, 25, 33 and 43. More specifically, these claims have been amended to include the feature that the hard grain or hard material, used to form the low CTE cermet materials of this invention, have a small grain size. Specifically, a grain size in the range of from 1 to 10 micrometers.

Applicants have amended the above-noted claims in manner in response to a telephone interview that was had with the Examiner for this application. During this interview, the relevance of the Fang patent was discussed and it was generally thought that amending the claims to limit the size of the hard phase particle being bonded by the binder would operate to distinguish the low CTE cermet material from the composite disclosed in Fang.

In view thereof, Applicants respectfully request that the proffered amended claims be entered, and submit that the claims as amended are properly patentable over Fang.

II. Objection Based on Informalities

Applicants have amended the specification to correctly reference FIG. 5. Applicants submit that this amendment addresses the informality issue raised by the Examiner in the above-identified Office action.

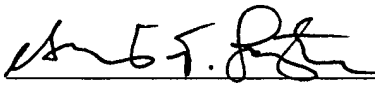
III. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that the above-noted amendments be entered, that examination be continued, and that this application be passed to allowance.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account 10-0440, or to credit any overpayment to the same. A duplicate copy of this paper is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4/1/03


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